

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4218

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, SF, WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: FURTHER COMMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION

REF: USUN 02988

1. THE SAG ARGUMENT THAT WESTERN FIVE SUPPORT FOR THE DRAFT
RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY "WOULD SO DESTROY CONFIDENCE THAT IT
WOULD BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO COOPERATE WITH THE FIVE IN IMPLEMENTING
THEIR PROPOSAL" IMPLIES THAT THERE ARE TWO DISTINCT ELEMENTS IN
THE SAG POSITION. ONE ELEMENT FOCUSES ON THE RESOLUTION ITSELF
AND REFLECTS THEIR FIRM CONVICTION THAT THE RESOLUTION BOTH
PREJUDICES THEIR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AND WILL BE ENFORCIBLY BINDING
UPON THEM. THE OTHER FOCUSES ON THEIR CONTENTION THAT THE FIVE
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HAVE ACTED IN BAD FAITH AND HAVE BROKEN A CLEAR AGREEMENT WITH
THEM. OF THE TWO, THE CHARGE OF BAD FAITH, EVEN IF ADVANCED
PRIMARILY FOR PROPAGANDA REASONS, MAY BE THE MORE SERIOUS, IN THAT
IT IMPLIES A DECISION NOT TO SEEK A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE, BUT
TO FORGE AHEAD WITH THEIR OWN PLANS FOR NAMIBIA REGARDLESS OF THE
CONSEQUENCES. MORE SERIOUS STILL, HOWEVER, MAY BE THE IMPLICATIONS
THIS HAS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF WESTERN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

2. IN SEPTELS WE HAVE TRANSMITTED TEXTS OF HEADLINED FRONT PAGE ARTICLES CARRIED BY THE "CITIZEN" AND THE "RAND DAILY MAIL" (RDM) THIS MORNING. THE RDM SAYS BOTHA DELIVERED AN ULTIMATUM TO THE WESTERN FIVE LAST NIGHT THREATENING TO BREAK OFF DISCUSSIONS ON NAMIBIA IF THE UNSC ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR THE INCLUSION OF WALVIS BAY. THE ARTICLE, MOST OF WHICH COULD ONLY HAVE COME FROM LEAKS OR A BACKGROUND BRIEFING BY SAG OFFICIALS BEFORE OR ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER BOTHA SAW THE FIVE LAST NIGHT, ALSO STATES THAT THE SAG CONSIDERS THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION "TO BE A BLATANT CONTRADICTION OF A CATEGORIC ASSURANCE GIVEN IN WRITING BY THE WESTERN FIVE THAT THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE WOULD NOT BE RAISED BEFORE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRY." IT CONFIRMS HOWEVER THAT THE SAG HAD AGREED TO NEGOTIATE THE FUTURE OF THE PORT WITH AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIAN GOVERNMENT. THE "CITIZEN" STORY REPORTS THAT BOTHA WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE FOR NEW YORK DURING THE WEEKEND BUT THAT HIS VISIT WAS CANCELLED IMMEDIATELY WHEN THE SAG WAS INFORMED OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT (I.E., THE RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY). BOTH ARTICLES GIVE REASONABLY ACCURATE VERSIONS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSED WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION BUT TEND TO INTERPRET ITS EFFECT AS CONSTITUTING FULL SUPPORT TO THE SWAPO POSITION THAT WALVIS BAY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NAMIBIA.

3. SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES IN THE "PRETORIA NEWS" AND JOHANNESBURG "STAR" (TEXT OF LATTER BY SEPTEL) ERRONIOUSLY STATE THAT THE WALVIS CONFIDENTIAL

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BAY RESOLUTION MAKES THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA "DEPENDENT ON THE REINTEGRATION OF WALVIS BAY WITHIN THE TERRITORY." ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA WAS SPECIFICALLY CITED AS NOT WILLING TO COMMENT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION HAD DEVELOPED, THE "STAR" USES PHRASES AND IDEAS USED ONLY BY BOTHA IN HIS TALK WITH THE FIVE YESTERDAY AND THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE CONCLUSION THAT MUCH OF THE MATERIAL, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE REPETITIVE CHARGES OF "DOUBLE CROSS," ORIGINATED WITH HIM.

4. ALTHOUGH BOTHA'S TACTICS SHOW LITTLE APPARENT DESIRE TO LEAVE ROOM FOR COMPROMISE, SOUTH AFRICANS PUT SUCH A PREMIUM ON TOUGHNESS AND ON NOT BEING PUSHED AROUND THAT THEY OFTEN OVERLOOK THE VALUE OF LEAVING SOME NEGOTIATING ROOM FOR THE OTHER SIDE. THUS ONE CANNOT ASSUME THAT THEY HAVE NECESSARILY DECIDED IN ADVANCE THAT THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS IRREVOCABLY ENDED. NONETHELESS, THEIR REPEATED AND EMPHATIC PUBLIC ASSERTIONS OF WESTERN DOUBLE CROSSING AND BAD FAITH LEAVE LITTLE FLEXIBILITY TO EITHER SIDE. EITHER THEY MUST BE PREPARED TO DO SOME VERY FUNDAMENTAL REINTERPRETING OF THE SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS OR THEY ARE PREPARED TO BREAK WITH THE WESTERN FIVE ON NAMIBIA WITH THE HOPE THAT THEY CAN DO SO WITH REASONABLE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY CAN LIMIT THE COSTS TO SOUTH AFRICA'S BROADER INTERESTS. HOW THEY

COULD PERSUADE THEMSELVES THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO LIMIT SUCH
COSTS IS UNCLEAR -- UNLESS THEY ARE COUNTING ON AFRICAN AND SWAPO
REACTION TO BE SO EXTREME AND IRRATIONAL AS TO CLOUD THE FACT THAT
IT IS SOUTH AFRICA WHICH CREATED THE IMPASSE.
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